Canadian Centre
For Foreign Policy
Development

Centre canadien
pour le développement
de la politique étrangère

125 promenade Sussex Drive, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0G2
Telephone/Téléphone : **613 944 8278** Fax/Télécopieur : **613 944 0687**
www.cfp-pec.gc.ca

101-00748/

THE LIGHT WEAPONS PROBLEM: THE WAY AHEAD

Edward J. Laurance
Monterey Institute of
International Studies

Ottawa, 24 October, 1997

The Light Weapons Problem: The Way Ahead

Edward J. Laurance
Monterey Institute of International Sudies

A Working Paper Prepared for the
Canadian Council for International Peace and Security

Presented on 24 October 1997

Ottawa, Canada

Canadian Council for International Peace and Security
Conseil Canadien pour la paix et la sécurité internationales

300 - 1 Nicholas Street ■ Ottawa, Ontario K1N 7B7 ■ 613 562-2736 (Tel.) ■ 613 562-2741 (FAX)

SEMINAR

THE LIGHT WEAPONS PROBLEM: THE WAY AHEAD

PROGRAMME

09:00	Introductory Remarks	Peggy Mason (CCIPS)
09:15- 10:15	The Way Ahead	Edward Laurence
10:15- 10:45	Coffee Break	
10:45- 11:00	The Vienna Process	James Hayes
11:00- 11:15	The Canadian View	Robert Lawson
11:15- 12:00	Discussion	

E-mail: ccips@web.apc.org **Web-site:** http://www.web.net/~ccips

The Light Weapons Problem: The Way Ahead

Edward J. Laurance
Monterey Institute of International Studies

October 1997

INTRODUCTION

In the wake of the successful meeting in Oslo finalizing a draft treaty outlawing anti-personnel land mines, and the universal claim for what has been called the Ottawa Process, the Canadian Foreign Minister Lloyd Axworthy has formally asked the international community if it is not time to expand such a process to solve similar problems stemming from the proliferation of the entire class of weapons now reeking havoc around the globe, namely small arms and light weapons. This call is not new in substance, since for several years non-governmental organizations, academic experts and the international community has framed the issues and begun to act. But politically the Canadian call comes at a time that is ripe for action. Recent United Nations reports, regional initiatives and the interest of several influential countries in addressing the issue are all emerging in parallel. And there is a growing consensus that the humanitarian impact of the excessive accumulation and proliferation of this class of weapon, both legally and illegally, has reached the breaking point.

The first section of this brief policy paper reviews the building blocks for action, to include evidence of the deadly nexus of intra-state conflict and the growing availability of the tools to prosecute such conflicts, and the variety of responses that are emerging at all levels of the international community. The unique characteristics of this class of weapon are then presented as a challenge to those who would lead a campaign against their misuse. The final part of the paper presents the multiple approaches required to minimize and eliminate the negative consequences stemming from the use of these weapons, to include a campaign similar to the one involving anti-personnel land mines, specific capacity-building strategies in support of any treaty or code of principles emerging from the campaign, and a full-scale effort to enhance the regional and international organizations that can play a major role in the solution of this problem.

BUILDING BLOCKS

Consensus on the Dominance and Global Nature of Intra-State Conflict

With the post- Cold War era well underway, many aspects of international security remain familiar. The management of nuclear weapons stockpiles, operational and surplus, as well as the Middle East and European security still dominate the agendas of major powers. But these powers, and more importantly middle-level powers and the developing world which continues to host the conflicts, find the security agenda increasingly concerned with intra-state conflict.

Intra-state conflict can take on at least four distinct forms of armed violence using military weapons:

- random acts of violence by individuals or groups having no aspiration to the status of State, e.g. criminality among rival gangs;
- sporadic incidents of violence by organized groups seeking greater political participation, cultural autonomy and economic benefits within the existing State structure;
- sustained resort to violence over long periods of time by organizations and movements with intent to supplant the existing governmental authority of the State over all or part of its territory;
- intense acts of extreme violence by groups operating within the context of the partial or complete breakdown of the State.

In his speech to the United Nations General Assembly on 25 September 1997, Foreign Minister Axworthy noted what is now agreed upon by most of the international community, namely the increasing prevalence of intra-state conflict. Most importantly, he pointed to the humanitarian costs of such conflicts. He described these wars as "long and bitter; above all wars in which civilians suffer the most, and children and women are often deliberately targeted" In this type of war "the distinctions that once informed the work of international diplomacy - between military security concerns and humanitarian or civil concerns - break down. This blurring of the lines, along with heightened media presence, has strongly effected international public opinion. Fewer and fewer people are willing to view war as an acceptable instrument of state policy."

And despite these conflicts occurring within states, they are global in nature and require multilateral solutions. First, the number of United Nations peace operations mounted to deal with these new conflicts has increased significantly. It is these operations which must face the consequences of this unchecked accumulation of small arms and light weapons on a daily basis, whether engaged in preventive diplomacy, peacekeeping and peace enforcement, or post-conflict reconstruction. Such operations now include a disarmament element, the function of which is the creation of a more stable environment with fewer weapons in the hands of those who threaten the success of the operation. Second, the acquisition of these weapons often occurs across national boundaries. Third, a major cause of these conflicts is the inability of affected states to cope with the influx of these weapons in their territory. The international community has a major and a traditional responsibility for capacity-building. All of these above factors provide the rationale and justification for outside help, help that to this point is occurring in a context defined by few international norms regarding the acquisition, supply and use of this class of weapon.

The emerging consensus on the effects of excessive and destabilizing accumulations of these weapons

Some influential observers and activists, especially those with an interest in prolonging these conflicts, continue to deny the link between arms buildups and conflict, often focusing on how difficult it is to define when an arms buildup is "excessive" or "destabilizing." Meanwhile, the people of the countries in conflict, and those from other countries such as Canada which are committed to conflict

resolution and the enhancement of human security, are much clearer on the negative effects accompanying such buildups.

First, the increase in the use of this class of weapon increases the destructiveness and lethality of conflicts. Individuals and groups who politically disagree more easily resort to violence instead of resolving conflicts peacefully. Large accumulations of light weapons, especially assault rifles and hand grenades, increase the lethality of conflict when compared to less capable weapons such as handguns and knives. This leads to greater numbers of civilian casualties and refugees, which overwhelm health care systems and in general disrupt the economic, social and political development of the country.

The second basic effect is the increase in criminal or non-political acts committed with these military-style weapons – armed robberies, hijacking, terrorism, stealing of livestock, drug trading and smuggling. The criminal elements in a state are in some cases better armed, in quantity and/or quality, than the legitimate security forces of the state. This also enhances the proliferation of agents of violence, including drug dealers and criminal gangs. Rival groups within a state race to maintain an inventory of equally capable equipment.

Third, the level of violence promulgated by these weapons is so high that it forces citizens to arms themselves, either personally or through private non-governmental security organizations. Additionally, the availability and use of military-style weapons emboldens the disaffected in many parts of the world. Faced with little or no economic or social development, desperate citizens opt for acquiring a weapon for individual survival, basic needs, or commercial purposes. The end result is an overall increase in the number of weapons in the society.

Finally, the increase in the availability and use of this class of weapon increases the threat to peace-building. Recently reformed or reconstituted security forces in states transitioning to democracy revert to repression when faced with increased criminal activity or intra-state violence. It becomes more difficult to conduct development projects and programs, leading to a decline in economic aid from donors who question how their funds can achieve goals in a violent environment. Even when a United Nations peacekeeping operation is successful, the post-conflict reconstruction process is imperiled by violence with this class of weapon. While eliminating the root causes of the violence would require socio-economic development, effective democracy, and a credible law and order system, these developments take time and are harder to maintain in an environment of indiscriminate access to the tools of violence.

No one would suggest that it is only arms buildups that cause these effects, or that the root causes of the human suffering seen in these conflicts be ignored. In its September 1997 report the United Nations Panel of Experts on Small Arms (UN Small Arms Panel) stated that "accumulations of small arms and light weapons by themselves do not cause the conflicts in which they are used.....These conflicts have underlying causes which arise from a number of accumulated and complex political, commercial, socio-economic, ethnic, cultural and ideological factors. Such conflicts

will not be finally resolved without addressing the root causes."[1] But in the remainder of the UN Small Arms Panel report, and a host of other places, the international community has begun to focus on the actual tools of violence, the tools which bring meaning to the adjectives "deadly" and "mass" being used to define conflict. But just as salient is the call for "immediate operational steps to build a firebreak against the outbreak and spread of mass violence."[2]

Consensus on types of weapons used in intra-state conflict

There is now a consensus as to what type of weapon is most related to the human suffering stemming from these conflicts. In its report, the UN Small Arms Panel described the general characteristics of these weapons which set them apart from those normally addressed by arms control and disarmament policies. They are typically smaller, weigh less, cost less, are more portable, and less visible than major conventional weapons. Except for ammunition, weapons in this class do not require an extensive logistical and maintenance capability, and are capable of being carried by an individual combatant, pack animal or by a light vehicle.

The UN Small Arms Panel took these characteristics into account, as well as an assessment of the weapons actually being used in these conflicts, to reach a consensus on the following typology of weapons that can guide the international community in its search for weapons-focused solutions.

---

[1] . *Report of the Panel of Governmental Experts on Small Arms*. Report # A/52/298 from the Secretary General to the General Assembly (New York: United Nations, 27 August 1997), p. 15.

[2] . Jane E. Holl. *Progress Report*.. Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict. July 1995, p. 4.

Types of Weapons Used in Current Intra-State Conflicts

Small arms:

- Revolvers and self-loading pistols
- Rifles and carbines
- Sub-machine guns
- Assault rifles
- Light machine guns

Light weapons:

- Heavy machine guns
- Hand-held under-barrel and mounted grenade launchers
- Portable anti-aireraft guns
- Portable anti-tank guns, recoilless rifles
- Portable launchers of anti-tank missile and rocket systems
- Portable launchers of anti-aircraft missile systems
- Mortars of calibers up less than 100 mm inclusive

Ammunition and explosives

- Cartridges (rounds) for small arms
- Shells and missiles for light weapons
- Mobile containers with missiles or shells for single-action anti-aircraft and anti-tank systems
- Anti-personnel and anti-tank hand grenades
- Land mines
- Explosives

Consensus on the Causes of Increased Availability of Small Arms and Light Weapons

Since no public policy can proceed without addressing the causes of those outcomes which are the target of the policy, the lack of a consensus on either the presence or nature of the undesirable outcomes, or the causes of such outcomes, dooms the effort to forge policy action. As seen above, just as in the case of anti-personnel land mines, a consensus has begun to emerge that the humanitarian, economic and social consequences of intra-state conflict must be addressed, and that preventing or reducing excessive accumulations of arms is a priority for action. But the shape of such action will depend critically on how these arms were proliferated and accumulated, a question that is beginning to be answered more clearly.

A consensus on what must be fixed in order to prevent the reoccurrence of the conflicts all seek to avoid is emerging. Solutions require changes involving real actors, processes and systems - - governments, military forces, arms dealers, export controls, border surveillance, etc. Inevitably this requires those seeking solutions to examine both supply and demand factors or causes, alternatively calling for better government and security in the state experiencing the problem, or for more controls by those states from which the arms originate. Not surprisingly this debate occurred in the UN Small Arms Panel, where both types of states were members. But the Panel did produce a consensus report which listed both supply and demand causes, concluding the prevalence of one type over the other would depend on the specific

case. The literature on causes of arms buildups is rich. But the Panel's list has a political value and can serve as the starting point for policy action.

On the demand side the experts identified the following demand factors:

* Intra-state conflicts and terrorism serve to attract large numbers of small arms and light weapons;
* The diminution or loss of control of the state over its security function, and the inability to guarantee the security of its citizens, creates a natural demand for weapons by citizens seeking to protect themselves and their property;
* The incomplete reintegration of former combatants into society after a conflict has ended, in combination with the inability of States to provide governance and security, may lead to their participation in crime and armed violence.
* The presence of a culture of weapons, whereby the possession of a military-style weapon is a status symbol, can easily be transformed into a culture of violence when basic security structures are absent and poverty is prevalent.

On the supply side:

* At the global level, the primary supply-side factor is the basic principle governing the conduct of relations among member states of the United Nations, that states have a right to export and import small arms and light weapons.
* New production of small arms and light weapons has declined but there remains an effort to dispose of surplus weapons.
* A large surplus of this class of weapon has been created by the reduction in armed forces in the post-Cold War period, much of which has found its way to intra-state conflicts, especially from states that have ceased to exist or lost political control.
* During some armed conflicts large quantities of these weapons were distributed to citizens by governments, self-defense units were formed by governments, and gun possession laws were liberalized. When the conflicts ended the weapons remained in the hands of citizens and were available for recirculation within the society, in the region and even outside the region.
* Several United Nations peacekeeping and post-conflict peace-building operations have resulted in the incomplete disarmament of former combatants owing to peace agreements or mandates which did not cover small arms and light weapons disarmament, or shortfalls in the implementation of mandates because of inadequate operational guidance or resources. These weapons became available for criminal activities, recirculation and illicit trafficking.

Consensus on the Modes of Acquisition

In addition to these basic causes, there is also a growing consensus on the modes of acquisition of this class of weapon, modes that differ from the superpower-dominated arms supply system of the Cold War. The variety of modes for acquiring these weapons is much greater now, requiring further adjustments in the thinking of those who would diminish conflict by focusing on the weapons themselves.

It is still true that "much of the supply and acquisition of small arms and light weapons is legitimate trade which occurs among Governments or among legal

entities authorized by governments."[3], legal being defined as any transfer that is not "contrary to the laws of States and/or international law."[4] A state can also legally bolster its own security and political power by arming subnational groups which support its political or social policies and act as a supplement to government security forces. This has occurred in many places, including South Africa, Mozambique, Colombia, and Guatemala.

But several major changes have taken place since the Cold War ended which result in much of the trade in this class of weapon not conforming to the above definitions of legal trade . First, much less of the current trade is in newly produced weapons. "One factor bearing on the availability, circulation and accumulation of these weapons in many areas of conflict is their earlier supply by cold war opponents."[5] Additionally, producing states outside the regions of intra-state conflict have less need for the weapons in their arsenals and as they have down-sized their armed forces, economic necessity forces them to export the surplus, not new production. Trading in surplus weapons is much less susceptible to state controls.

A second major change in the post-Cold War arms trading system is the relative rise in illicit or illegal trade. As previously mentioned, this phenomena is enhanced by the very characteristics of the class of weapon now dominating the world's armed conflicts, i.e., light, portable, inexpensive, easily concealed, etc. There are at least three types that are identified and the verified in most areas of intra-state conflict.

The first type of illicit mode of acquisition is the covert or secret transfer of arms to a government or non-state actor from another government. A second variant of illicit transfer is the black market. As United Nations arms embargoes have increased, and more and more conflicts involve non-state groups, black market suppliers have become the only source of arms for countries under embargo. A third variant is illicit in-country circulation. One of the major differences between this class of weapon and major conventional weapons is the fact that a significant amount of the supply is already in the region and sometimes in the country where it is in the greatest demand. Types of acquisition in this category include theft from government arsenals, ambushes and other tactics employed for the purpose of seizing weapons from opponents, and subnational groups conducting arms deals with each other.

---

[3] . *Report of the Panel of Governmental Experts on Small Arms*, p. 17.

[4] . The United Nations Small Arms Panel included this in their consensus report, citing an earlier consensus reached in paragraph 7 of *Guidelines for international arms transfers in the context of General Assembly resolution 46/36 H of 6 December 1991*. United Nations Disarmament Commission Report. A/CN.10/1996/CRP.3, May 3 1996.

[5] . *Report of the Panel of Governmental Experts on Small Arms* , p. 15.

The International Community Has Begun to Act

The final building block is the work already underway at all levels of the international community. An impressive array of actions have begun to coalesce around the issue of small arms and light weapons as a primary factor in preventing and reducing armed conflict. They are briefly described in this section and will be particularly important in an Ottawa Two process which holds as one of its major attributes the integration of actors and efforts at all levels. These actions are the evidence that many of the building blocks described above are real and being acted on, that resources are being allocated based on their reality. These actions also serve as a source of ideas for further action, especially as their success or failure can point the way forward. Given its critical participation and leadership in many of these actions, Canada is in a unique position to lead the way forward.

The United Nations

The United Nations is turning its attention to the problems stemming from the proliferation of light weapons and their use in conflicts. The following is a brief chronicle of actions taken or underway:

- *Peace operations* The combatants in these conflicts employed mainly small arms and light weapons. United Nations peace forces and the civilian populations in these conflict areas have been increasingly subjected to the negative effects of these weapons, including a rising level of casualties. As a result peace operations now routinely involve weapons collection, disarmament, and destruction, with a wide variety of outcomes related to mandates and implementation.

- *The Mali mission* As early as 1985, General Assembly Resolution 40/151H reaffirmed the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament, and provided the opportunity for the United Nations to provide advisory services to Member States, on request, in the field of disarmament and security. This resolution was used by Mali in October 1993 to request the Secretary-General to assist in the collection of light weapons proliferating in that country. The requested assistance was provided in the form of an Advisory Mission in August 1994, which issued its report to the Secretary-General in November 1994. In February/March 1995 the same advisory mission visited Burkino Faso, Chad, Cote d'Ivoire, Mauritania, Niger and Senegal. The result has been a relatively successful turn-in and collection of weapons, and a resolution to the conflict between Mali and the Tuareg minority. The importance of this example is not only its modest success. It also demonstrates that there are states willing to ask for assistance and the international community must be prepared to act.

- *Great Lakes Commission of Inquiry* In addition to the Sahelo-Saharan subregion, the United Nations has been active in addressing the proliferation of armaments in the Great Lakes region of southern Africa. In resolution 1013 of 7 September 1995 the Security Council authorized an International Commission of Inquiry to investigate allegations that former Rwandan government forces were being supplied with arms in violation of a previous Council-imposed arms embargo. The

Commission confirmed these allegations and concluded that much more could and should be done to stem the flow of weapons in this region.[6]

- *Secretary General* In January 1995, the Secretary-General reviewed the experience of the past three years and issued a Supplement to the Agenda for Peace.[7] After reviewing the progress made in weapons of mass destruction, he called for "parallel progress in conventional arms, particularly with respect to light weapons." He introduced the concept of micro-disarmament, referring to the light weapons actually being used in the conflicts with which the UN is dealing, those "that are actually killing people in the hundreds of thousands." In regard to small arms other than anti-personnel land mines he noted that the "world is awash with them and traffic in them is very difficult to monitor, let alone intercept." He concluded that "it will take a long time to find effective solutions. I believe strongly that the search should begin now." The new Secretary General has continued to highlight the need for action in the area of small arms and light weapons.

- *Guidelines-Illicit Trade* On 6 December 1991 the General Assembly adopted resolution 46/36H on international arms transfers, with particular emphasis on the illicit arms trade. On 3 May 1996 the United Nations Disarmament Commission, after three years of deliberation, adopted a consensus set of "Guidelines for international arms transfers in the context of General Assembly resolution 46/36 H of 6 December 1991."[8]

- *Panel of Experts on Small Arms* On 12 December 1995, as part of a continuing effort to address the increasing problem of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, the United Nations General Assembly adopted resolution 50/70B entitled "Small Arms." This resolution requested the Secretary-General to prepare a report, with the assistance of a panel of qualified governmental experts, on: " (a) the types of small arms and light weapons actually being used in conflicts being dealt with by the United Nations; (b) the nature and causes of the excessive and destabilizing accumulation and transfer of small arms and light weapons, including their illicit production and trade; and (c) the ways and means to prevent and reduce the excessive and destabilizing accumulation and transfer of small arms and light weapons, in particular as they cause or exacerbate conflict." The Panel held three regional workshops and in September 1997 submitted its report to the Secretary - General.

- *Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice* In May 1997 this Commission, a component of the U.N. Economic and Social Council and based in Vienna, passed a resolution on firearm regulation for the purpose of crime prevention and public health and safety. It was based on information provided by an Experts Group headed by a firearms expert from the Canadian Department of Justice. Fifty governments voluntarily responded to a survey which covered issues related to

---

[6]. *Report of the International Commission of Inquiry (Rwanda).* United Nations. S/1996/195, March 14 1996.

[7] .*Supplement to An Agenda for Peace., op. cit.*

[8] . *Guidelines for international arms transfers in the context of General Assembly resolution 46/36 H of 6 December 1991*. United Nations Disarmament Commission Report. A/CN.10/1996/CRP.3, May 3 1996.

firearms, including legislation, regulation, use, trade and manufacturing, trafficking, policy and public education initiatives. Although its focus was on crime from a domestic perspective, it uncovered and documented much evidence that points to small arms and light weapons as an international problem. The resolution also encouraged Member States to consider specific regulatory approaches. The work of the Commission continues as Member States may still complete the survey, and regional workshops are being held in Slovenia, Tanzania, Brazil and India.

The World Bank

The World Bank is in the process of setting up a small section on post-conflict reconstruction. This office will deal with issues such as demobilization of soldiers, and their reintegration into society, as well as the collection and destruction of weapons surplus to the security needs of the governments and societies involved. The office will bring together those parts of the World Bank who are already involved in this aspect of post-conflict reconstruction.

Regional efforts

West Africa

As indicated above in the section on United Nations actions, the countries of West Africa have availed themselves of UN assistance in dealing with problems stemming from the proliferation and availability of light weapons which have destabilized the subregion. But in addition they have acted on their own. A conference on Conflict Prevention, Disarmament, and Development in West Africa was convened in Bamako from November 25-29, 1996. Delegations from 12 West African countries searched for a common position on possibilities for future regional cooperation. The idea of a moratorium on the importing, exporting, and manufacturing of light arms was the subject of particular interest throughout the conference. Delegates agreed to submit the idea to their respective governments.

Southern Africa

The Southern Africa Development Cooperation (SADC) organization has established an Inter-state Defence and Security Committee (ISDSC). At a recent meeting of its Public Security Sub-Committee, it recognized that "firearms and drug trafficking cause the most serious threat to communities in the region, particularly the smuggling of firearms...." The Committee went on to recommend computerized registration of firearms, a regional data for all stolen firearms, and special operations where illegal firearms could be retrieved.[9]

---

[9] . William Benson. *Regulatory mechanisms aimed at stemming the proliferation of light weapons.* Unpublished paper distributed at the Conference on Light Weapons and Peacebuilding in Central and East Africa. Capetown, 23-25 July 1997.

Latin America

The OAS has begun to address the problem of arms and conflict from two different perspectives. First, the Inter-American Drug Abuse and Control Commission of the OAS is developing , through a Group of Experts on the Control of Arms and Explosives Related to Drug Trafficking, model regulations for the control of the smuggling of weapons and explosives and its linkage to drug trafficking in the Inter-American region. A second OAS initiative is the development of a Convention Against the Illicit Manufacturing and Trafficking of Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives and Other Related Materials. The Convention requires each OAS state to establish a national firearms control system and a register of manufacturers, traders, importers and exporters of these commodities. It also calls for the establishment of a national body to interact with other states and an OAS advisory committee. It also calls for the standardization of national laws and procedures within the OAS, and ensuring effective control of borders and ports.

European Union

In June 1997 the European Union agreed to an *EU Programme for Preventing and Combating Illicit Trafficking in Conventional Arms.* Citing the importance of the issue and the several actions already taken by the United Nations, the EU Member States vowed to strengthen their collective efforts to prevent and combat illicit trafficking of arms, particularly of small arms, within the EU. Further they called for concerted action to assist other countries in preventing and combating illicit trafficking of arms. Specifically they recommended focusing on strengthening laws, training police and customs officials to enforce export laws, setting up regional points of contact to report trafficking, setting up national commissions, preventing corruption, and promoting regional cooperation and the use of data bases.

The EU also agreed to suppress such trafficking as part of United Nations peace operations, set up weapons collection, buy back and destruction programmes, set up educational programmes to promote awareness of the negative consequences of such trafficking, and promote the integration of former combatants into civilian life.

NGOs and Academics

In the NGO world, several efforts are underway directly focusing on the linkage between the accumulation and availability of small arms and light weapons, and armed violence. And there is also a significant literature developing around the problems associated with the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. Much of this work is documented in *Small Arms and light Weapons: An Annotated Bibliography*, published by Canada's Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade.

Both the academic and NGO activity has been focused on several important functions. First, an epistemic community is being developed around the issue of small arms, light weapons and micro-disarmament. This includes the use of the Internet, the exchange of papers and documents, workshops and conferences, and the publication of several major books on the subject. The British American Security Information Council has taken the lead here. Second, information from public sources

on types of light weapons is being published. Third, national capabilities to produce such weapons are becoming transparent, to include rudimentary information on their export. Fourth, case studies are being written by regional specialists who have witnessed directly the impact of small arms and light weapons on conflict. These case studies are particularly useful as a source of answers to three critical questions; 1) What are the negative consequences of excessive accumulations of these weapons?; 2) What are the modes of acquisition?; and 3) What are the various policies being developed to deal with these consequences?

Several NGOs have begun to document through field research many of the realities described in the first section of this paper. As only one example, the Arms Project of Human Rights Watch conducted field research in Central Africa that led the United Nations to create the *Great Lakes Commission of Inquiry* referred to earlier. This is a case where the UN acted to document the work of an NGO and challenge the United Nations to act.

Another role of NGOs was highlighted in July 1997 when International Alert and the Centre for Conflict Resolution at the University of Capetown co-sponsored a Conference on Light Weapons and Peacebuilding in Central and East Africa held in Capetown. The participants were a mix of NGOs from the region, international NGOs, academics, representatives from international organizations, and most importantly representatives from governments of the region. And the format allowed enough interaction so that proposed solutions by non-governmental participants and international organizations were forced to stand the test of challenges by the states in the region who are embroiled in the conflicts which utilize these weapons. The result was a realistic survey of the problem, and practical recommendations as to what can be done in the short and long term.

The work of the Bonn International Center for Conversion (BICC) brings an additional dimension to the effort, that of practical work in the demobilization and reintegration of combatants and a focus on the collection and destruction of small arms and light weapons as part of their surplus weapons project. BICC has done pioneering work in identifying surplus stocks and promoting their destruction, to include an effort to engage the private sector in such activities.

CHALLENGES

If the impetus for including small arms and light weapons in an Ottawa Two process is the anti-personnel land mines campaign, a quick glance at an analogous approach focusing on small arms light weapons reveals some significant challenges not present in the land mine campaign.

Assault Rifles and Hand Grenades Are Not Land mines

Arguably, the humanitarian damage from assault rifles, hand grenades and the other military-style weapons cited in the UN typology is comparable to or perhaps greater than that from anti-personnel land mines. The images from Rwanda and Zaire have not faded. And in El Salvador, armed gangs using hand grenades and other light weapons have created a casualty rate higher than that of the full-scale civil war that

ended in 1992. But this class of weapon presents some unique problems which make solutions more challenging than those devised for problems associated with weapons of mass destruction, major conventional weapons, and the aforementioned anti-personnel land mines.

First, in any conflict prevention or reduction effort, it is critical to recognize that there are underlying or root causes of intra-state conflict, regardless of the weapons involved. These causes typically include ethnic rivalries, discrimination, poverty, racism, terrorism, drug trafficking, and the collapse of state security institutions. In such an environment it is more difficult to directly link the accumulation of small arms and light weapons with the outbreak, conduct, exacerbation and termination of conflict, compared to other classes of weapons.

Second, most efforts at disarmament during the Cold War, and in the current era when the weapons concerned are major conventional weapons, always take into account the principles and purposes of its UN Charter, especially the right to self-defense, non-interference in the internal affairs of states, and the reaffirmation of the right of self-determination of all peoples. In the case of this class of weapon, these principles are more sensitive since this type of conflict is most often within a state's jurisdiction, or at least its geographic boundaries. In many states experiencing these conflict situations, citizens can legitimately own and use small arms for personal security. The line between crime and warfare is often blurred.

Third, solving the problems caused in part by this class of weapon requires going beyond traditional arms control approaches. Solutions will require a broader scope of policy options involving such areas as development, human rights, refugees, judicial systems, and police work. And the search must go beyond the supply-side solutions which have dominated the ways and means of dealing with security problems created by weapons of mass destruction and major conventional weapons. The land mines campaign serves as a good model in this regard.

Fourth, dealing with this issue is also more challenging because this class of weapon is found in the inventory of every state's legitimate armed forces and in some cases the police as well. Pistols, rifles, automatic weapons, hand grenades and the like are manufactured for military purposes and are the mainstay of every army in the world. They are every state's primary tool in providing for its security. While the possession of nuclear weapons and major conventional weapons is justified by owner-states as legitimate tools of self defense, not every state possesses weapons in these two categories. Small arms and light weapons are present in every state, and every state participates in the legitimate trade in these weapons as a supplier or recipient. Although there is a body of international humanitarian law relating to the use of this class of weapon, there exist few international norms against possession itself. As a result finding the ways and means to prevent the negative consequences resulting from this class of weapon is more challenging.

Forging the NGO Coalition

From the beginning of the land mines campaign, the NGOs focused on the humanitarian damage caused by this weapon. The coalition which emerged leaned heavily toward those NGOs in the field working to build human security. It was a

natural part of their mandate to report casualties from these mines, and their location. This was especially true in a post-conflict situation where the parties to the conflict had resolved their differences and moved on to post-conflict reconstruction. Later in the campaign groups like Human Rights Watch produced excellent technical work on the mines themselves- who made them, how they, worked, etc. And for those states reluctant to join, the security and military aspects of the issue took priority. But for the most part it was a coalition forged on a humanitarian consensus, which allowed humanitarian NGOs to play a major role. For small arms and light weapons this situation is only in its infancy. As stated in the previous section, it will be difficult to stigmatize any specific weapon *per* se which is the backbone of every armed force in the world. It is their use in specific types of situations, by certain groups, and particularly against civilian targets, that must be dealt with. These goals will be difficult to accomplish with a primary focus on a ban on a certain type of weapon.

More importantly, many of the NGOs which have entered this field are veterans of battles involving the arms trade, military expenditures, and the other security issues which dominated the Cold War. This has several implications. First, these NGOs will seldom have links with the humanitarian NGOs so critical to focusing the world's attention on the damage being done by these weapons. Second, they will have a natural tendency to lean toward a supply-focused solution, since most come from industrialized states which in the past have been guilty of fueling such conflicts. This accusation is less true now than in previous eras, especially since many of the arms are left over and recirculating from Cold War conflicts. Third, such NGOs are not experienced in working in developing countries, where often it is demand-side factors which need to be addressed. And given the taboo in many developing countries regarding citizen involvement in security matters, it is proving difficult to develop such NGOs. Fourth, since these NGOs have an arms control and disarmament focus they have little capability to influence governmental policy or international organizations, especially when compared with environmental NGOs. The norm of governmental monopoly on military information is alive and well. Fifth, those humanitarian, refugee and development NGOs which could participate in developing solutions to the problems from small arms and light weapons are restricted from doing so by a traditional taboo against getting involved in military matters, less their status and presence in the country be threatened. This was not the case with land mines, where a consensus within the conflict zones had emerged against such weapons. The monopoly that many states had on military information has declined somewhat in the post-Cold War era, as seen in the rise in illicit trade. However, this does not mean that NGOs necessarily have a bigger role in providing arms data to governments. Tracking illicit arms dealing is very dangerous work.

MULTIPLE APPROACHES

In his General Assembly speech, Foreign Minister Axworthy stated that "land mines are not the only complex, cross-cutting problem to be addressed if we are to reduce or prevent conflict. All too often it is small arms, rather than the weapons systems targeted by disarmament efforts, that cause the greatest bloodshed today. In the hands of terrorists, criminals and the irregular militia and armed bands typical of internal conflict, these are true weapons of mass terror." With the building blocks in

place, and a healthy respect for the challenges, how can a strategy be developed to prevent and reduce the negative consequences stemming from the excessive accumulation and proliferation of this class of weapon?

I. Reinforce the building blocks

The basic premise of this call for action is that a consensus now exists on the dominance and global nature of intra-state conflict, the negative effects of excessive and destabilizing accumulations of this type of weapon, and the causes and modes of acquisition that must be addressed. A very brief look at both academia and the real world of governmental policymakers will reveal that this consensus may not be as "emerging" as indicated in this analysis. As Axworthy put it, "It will take truly innovative and co-operative efforts to reduce the toll taken by small arms, but we cannot allow ourselves to be deterred by the difficulty of the task." As the international community begins to address this problem in earnest and hits snag after snag, the easy way out will be to question the consensus found in these building blocks. But certainly those toiling in this field, at all levels, must continue to keep this consensus alive. As Axworthy said in Oslo of the land mine campaign, "we should not assume that the critics and opponents of the ban treaty have gone into hiding." For small arms and light weapons, a campaign in its infancy, this advice is all the more relevant.

In this regard any steps to increase transparency will enhance the consensus on the nature of the problem and the general approach forward. The work of those NGOs and governments which publicize the negative effects of conflict that can be directly linked to excessive arms supplies are particularly crucial.

And the various regional and multilateral efforts should continue as well. States interested in reducing the humanitarian damage from the use of these weapons should continue to support these efforts, as well as any national support in the form of capacity-building in states wishing to tackle these problems on their own.

II. A Campaign Based on a Treaty or Set of Principles

One of the primary reasons for the success of the land mines campaign was the ability to focus on a basic set of requirements that states could sign on to in the form of a treaty. Signers agree never to use, develop, produce, acquire, stockpile, retain or transfer anti-personnel land mines. They also agree to destroy current stocks, remove all mines they have put in place, and provide assistance for the care and rehabilitation of land mine victims.

As indicated above, a similar approach for small arms and light weapons will be challenging. Perhaps the biggest dilemma is the reality of legal trade and production of these weapons. Some governments and NGOs have been pushing for a Code of Conduct that would apply to these legal transactions. In the United States the Federation of American Scientists and other NGOs have brought together a broad array of NGOs to push the U.S. government into agreeing to a set of four principles which recipients of U.S. arms would have to meet: a democratic form of government; respect for internationally-recognized norms of human rights; non-

aggression against neighboring states; and participation in the UN Register of Conventional Arms. A version of this Code is being promoted in the U.S. Congress, and other countries such as the United Kingdom are moving in a similar direction. In May 1997 fifteen Nobel Laureates began a campaign for a global code of conduct.

The need to push for such responsible behavior in the form of a Code is obvious, and the effort itself should continue, as it is yet another way to highlight behavior which violates these norms. But for the issue at hand, the prevention or reduction of civilian casualties due to the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, the Code of Conduct approach has some distinct disadvantages. First, this approach has always been at the forefront of efforts by national governments and those opposed to the arms trade. As opposed to the building blocks reviewed in this presentation, at the global level very little support has been shown for such an approach. The call to do something about current problem needs something new to galvanize international public opinion. Second, principles involved in the Code approach are high politics and at the heart of what divides the globe on the issue of arms and conflict. Third, if the approach being discussed in this paper will have to rely on non-traditional verification of compliance, as in the case of the land mines treaty, these principles will be very difficult to operationalize and observe. Fourth, because of the conceptualization problem, states will have an easier time of excusing their behavior by stating that they are indeed complying with the Code. In sum, operationalizing the Code of Conduct in a series of practical measures that can be implemented by states and NGOs will be difficult.

In a sense the campaign to force states to responsibly acquire and export arms is already underway, and will and should intensify. However, given a state's sovereign right to engage in legal arms trade, the potential for establishing international norms will always be limited, as has been shown in any of the exercises designed to develop such norms (e..g., UN Register of Conventional Arms). Since a significant portion of the humanitarian damage stems from light weapons which are acquired illicitly, and the potential for a consensus for action has already been demonstrated, it is this mode of acquisition that should be the focus of an Ottawa Two process.

A. The Treaty

Goals and Objectives

As with land mines, the major objective of a treaty should be the human security of the all who live on this planet. As stated by Foreign Minister Axworthy in Oslo, we must "struggle to limit and restrain the horrendous impact of human conflict." Specifically the goal to preventing the use of these arms in a manner which causes the humanitarian, economic and social damage that is well known. Where such arms are already acquired and/or being used with this effect, the arms and their effects should be reduced.

Since the illicit modes of acquisition are well documented, a campaign should also have as an objective the prevention and reduction of acquisition using these illicit means.

A third objective is to establish a new set of norms regarding the acquisition and use of this class of weapon, stemming from the increasing number of states which sign and comply with the treaty.

Components of a treaty

Principles

All of the actions taken to date by the international community, briefly described earlier in this report, are a source of principles, norms and behaviors that would be agreed to by signatory states in any treaty that evolved in an Ottawa Two Process. To demonstrate how this might develop, this report puts forth some examples from the two most recent, and perhaps most influential given their global focus, actions. These are the work of the Expert Group on Firearm Regulation of the United Nations Commission on Criminal Justice and Crime Prevention, and the UN Small Arms Panel which submitted its report via the Secretary General to the General Assembly in September 1997.

The Expert Group on Firearm Regulation, headed by James Hayes of Canada, is conducting four regional workshops and inviting governments and selected NGOs to discuss "the possible development of a United Nations declaration of principles based on the following regulatory approaches:"

* Regulations relating to firearm safety and storage;
* Appropriate penalties for serious offenses involving the misuse or unlawful possession of firearms;
* Amnesty or similar programs to encourage citizens to surrender illegal, unsafe or unwanted firearms;
* A responsible and effective licensing system;
* A record-keeping system for the commercial distribution of firearms, and the appropriate marking of firearms at manufacture and at import.

The UN Small Arms panel, in its September 1997 report, came up with 22 recommendations, the following being most applicable to a treaty which could codify state behavior that would prevent and reduce the negative effects of excessive and destabilizing accumulations of this class of weapon. These principles were specifically related to small arms and light weapons, and the causes and effects produced earlier in their report.

* All states should determine in their national laws and regulations which arms are permitted for civilian possession and the conditions under which they can be used.
* All weapons which are not under legal civilian possession, and which are not required for the purposes of national defense and internal security, should be collected and destroyed by states as expeditiously as possible.
* All states should ensure that they have in place adequate laws, regulations and administrative procedures to exercise effective control over the legal possession of small arms and light weapons and over their transfer.
* States emerging from conflict should impose or reimpose licensing requirements on all civilian possession of these weapons on their territory.

* All states should exercise restraint with respect to the transfer of surplus military weapons and consider the possibility of destroying such weapons.

* All states should ensure the safeguarding of such weapons against loss through theft or corruption, in particular from storage facilities.

Transparency

In addition to a set of principles, states could agree to be more transparent regarding the variety of transactions and actors involved in the legal acquisition of small arms and light weapons. Care should be taken to respect the sovereignty of states and the rights of their citizens to bear arms, if applicable. And if such an approach meets resistance, for the well-known reasons that surfaced during the development of the UN Register of Conventional Arms, requirements for compliance could be adjusted in the direction of more voluntary and gradual compliance. While a Register analogous to the UN Register of Conventional Arms may be too ambitious at this juncture, states could agree to be make transparent the following types of information:

- legitimate trade flow of arms
- legitimate owners of weapons
- legitimate manufacturers and arms traders
- register of weapons with an international serial number upon manufacture
- record of weapons that have been seized, collected and destroyed
- clarification of which types of weapons are strictly for military or police work

National Commissions

Following the example of West Africa and the Organization of American States, national commissions could be established to enhance compliance with treaty principles. These commissions should be suited to the culture of each state, but ideally should include government, civil society and NGOs which can assist in meeting the treaty's requirements. It is well established that the lack of laws and regulations in one state can undermine the regulatory effects of another, encouraging illicit cross-national trafficking in arms. It is also clear that the establishment of an international organization with standards and regulations is not possible. But committing to a national commission, with the goal of enhancing the integration of intra-national and multilateral efforts, will enhance the potential for increased cooperation. These commissions will also put a dent in the arguments of some who will view this campaign as an attempt to put into place an intrusive arms control regime.

Collection and Destruction

Both the Commission on Criminal Justice and Crime Prevention and the UN Small Arms Panel emphasized the importance of collecting and destroying weapons surplus to the security needs of the state and its citizens. Given the practical and symbolic importance of this action, it should have a prominent place in any treaty, parallel to the land mine treaty provisos for removing mines and destroying stocks. There are

several reasons to emphasize this aspect of the treaty. First, there are many such efforts being undertaken by states, regional organizations and the United Nations during peace operations. Prominent inclusion in the treaty will codify behavior that many already agree is critical to the solution of the problem. Second, there are states in possession of surplus weapons which are reluctant to destroy them. The reasons vary from an almost theological view by uniformed militaries that operating weapons should be stored or sold and not destroyed, to complaints that it is too costly. Including this action in a treaty may provide the impetus for more states to come forth and destroy surplus stocks, including requesting the funds to do so. Third, the collection and destruction of weapons has proven to be of great psychological value. In post-conflict situations it is the final evidence that the parties have agreed to stop fighting and a signal that programs to improve human security can proceed. At the beginning of a conflict resolution process, while parties still possess such weapons, a collection and destruction campaign can highlight a consensus that the weapons do matter. Such efforts can take on a value beyond the actual diminution of capabilities to inflict casualties.

B. Core group of countries

As with the land mine campaign, there must be a core group of countries that develop the treaty and establish a process for signature and ratification. There are at least five types of states that should be in this core group. First, those states actually experiencing the human losses form these weapons must be represented. If not, the whole campaign will be passed off as either an altruistic exercise or worse, interference in the domestic affairs of developing states. It is very important that states reluctant to participate must see that at least some victim states want such a treaty and are willing to sign on.

Secondly, some states which responsibly produce, export and effectively control small arms and light weapons must also be in at the beginning. Otherwise the exercise will quickly deteriorate into what we have already witnessed, finger pointing based on supply and demand factors. This type of state can also demonstrate that such responsible behavior can be accomplished.

A third member of the core group should come from those states which have already committed to some of the solutions flowing from the principles in the treaty. This will go a long way to counter arguments that the whole thing is idealistic and unworkable.

Fourth, the core group should include some countries with extensive peacekeeping experience, especially when it comes to collecting and destroying weapons. The most convincing argument for doing something about these weapons comes from the peacekeepers who must deal with the massive amounts of these weapons on a daily basis.

Finally, it would be helpful to have core group members who appreciate and welcome the participation of NGOs.

C. NGOs

NGOs as data providers

A comparison with the success of environmental and humanitarian NGOs, and those NGOs which participated in the landmines campaign, is instructive. In these cases national governments came to rely on NGOs for data critical to the policy process. NGOs became allies in a coordinated process because of their ability to provide governments and international organizations with information. NGOs addressing the problem of small arms and light weapons are just beginning such an effort.

The policy agenda laid out for the UN gives NGOs new opportunities to actively participate in solving these problems through supplying critical information. As one example, it appears that a focus on ammunition may be fruitful. Arguably it may be easier to deal with the fewer number of ammunition sources than the weapons themselves. Which firms manufacture ammunition? Where in the developing world are the ammunition plants exported during the Cold War? How is ammunition shipped? What does it look like? This type of information is hard to come by in the usual published sources. It is interesting to note that the report of the UN Small Arms Panel includes a table on the production of assault, a table produced not by governments but by the independent Institute for Research on Small Arms in International Security. Just a few years earlier attempts to insert similar types of information into a report on the UN Register of Conventional Arms was dismissed out of hand.

Third, as Foreign Minister Axworthy pointed out in Oslo, the campaign must rely on " the power and reach of new information technologies...that give to the private citizen, the civil group and the expert the capacity for communication and exchange of information quickly, cheaply and across huge distances. Videos, posters, fax campaigns, e-mail, conference calls and the Internet have all helped in the rapid co-ordination and transmission of key messages of the campaign." As previously indicated, very little of this now exists on the issue of small arms and light weapons. As only one example, while there are dozens of videos that have been made on the humanitarian cost of land mines, only one or two have been made on light weapons problems. One of the most effective was made by NHK public television in Japan. It is in Japanese and I have found very few outside of Japan who have viewed this video. A very high priority is the development of a video that can be distributed in many languages.

Broadening the coalition

Despite the evidence in this report that weapons-focused policies are inexorably tied in with the larger issues of development and human rights, very little is being done to create the type of coalition that will enhance the very necessary contribution of NGOs in the solution of these problems. Illustrative of this was the annual Disarmament Week program put on by the NGO Committee on Disarmament. Except for the well-known coalition on landmines, almost all of the presenters and commenters were those who come from traditional arms control and disarmament agendas. What is needed in fora such as this is the full range of development and humanitarian NGOs working in the field making the case that human security is being diminished by the presence of too many weapons. One exception to this trend is the Arms Project of Human Rights Watch, which has succeeded in stigmatizing those states and actors who are enabling the outbreak and exacerbation of conflict by

illicit arms trafficking. Another is the Arms Sales Monitoring Project of the Federation of American Scientists, which is conducting field research and attempting to form a campaign to ban illicit arms trafficking. Donor states are now looking for model projects to demonstrate the utility of arms-focused policies. Only a broad based coalition of NGOs can contribute to this process.

NGOs who are capable and willing to participate in the campaign must be identified and brought together. The Federation of American Scientists has begun this process but as indicated previously, it will be more challenging than was the case for the land mine campaign. Such a coalition exists for promoting a Code of Conduct, so perhaps that is a starting point. If NGOs are to play a major role in monitoring compliance with this treaty, as is the case in the land mines treaty, some sort of educational campaign will be required.

Early warning

In their effort to be neutral, NGOs have a bias toward not being involved in things military. The increasing casualties suffered by humanitarian NGOs has begun to change this orientation. In many cases these NGOs are in place, on the ground, and could be the source of early warning, not just on the factors related to starvation and health epidemics but also to arms buildups as well. In Albania neutral observers observing the black market for arms note how the prices for an AK-47 rise and fall, one of several indicators of how many such weapons are on the market. To the extent that these NGOs do not do this because of lack of familiarity with weapons and their means of transfer into a zone of potential conflict, this could be rectified by the proliferation of knowledge on this dimension. But the risk to these NGOs should not be understated.

D. Supporters and opponents

Developing a strategy to galvanize public opinion and develop the political will in governments to support the campaign will require a clear understanding of natural supporters and opponents of such an effort. And these will be somewhat different than either the traditional arms control approach or the land mine campaign

If he goal is focused on eliminating illicit arms trafficking, in most cases the uniformed militaries of the world, as well as the police will be supportive. In those cases where military style weapons have proliferated throughout the society (e.g., South Africa, Albania. El Salvador), one of the first groups to call for collection and destruction are the forces of law and order.

If the goal is to eliminate or lower the levels of such arms in order to allow a society to develop economically, socially and politically, those NGOs and government organizations charged with policymaking and implementation in these areas will be natural allies. Human rights and refugee policy organizations can also be counted on to be supportive. Also, the business community which must operate in these violent arenas will be the first to assist. In El Salvador the 1996 weapons turn-in program originated with a committee of business persons who were faced with seeing all their post-1992 rebuilding work dissipated as violence with military weapons destabilized the society.

Natural opponents of such a treaty can also be identified. Many governments will resist what they perceive as an attempt to interfere with matters of domestic security. It should be noted that while the study on firearms was unanimously approved, the concept of the UN Small Arms Panel was disapproved by 16 states, based on this rationale. At the Expert Group on Firearms Regulation workshop in Slovenia, the National Rifle Association spelled out what was purported to be U.S. policy on a treaty of principles on firearms regulation. Among other points, the U.S. position is that there should be no international standards, no central registries, no obligation to accept evaluations from other countries regarding compliance, and no permanent entity to police compliance. While all of these objections can be easily dealt with, and have not been suggested in this paper, they reflect the type of thinking that many states will have going into such a campaign.

Another major reason for some states to resist this campaign is that in some regions, the conflicts are still ongoing. At the previously mentioned Capetown NGO conference held in July 1997, Central African states were briefed on the recommendations of the UN Small Arms Panel. Their response to the idea of a moratorium on exports and imports, and the collection and destruction of surplus, was the same. "Things are still in flux in this part of the world. We may need these weapons." And the arms dealers who make transfers happen in conflict areas are operating with increased impunity. Attempts to "register" their activities will be resisted.

Others who will resist include actors within states who possess surplus weapons but are reluctant to give them up. Military commanders in the former Soviet Union still sit on stocks which they periodically sell to pay their troops. There are 200,000 military weapons in storage in South Africa, where a police effort to destroy them is being resisted by the army, who want to export them. In Mozambique, the government still has significant stocks remaining from that long civil war.

Gun owners are often put forward as another group that will resist the campaign. This is somewhat exaggerated, as the humanitarian focus of the campaign has little to do with citizens who are armed for either self-defense or recreation. To the extent that the gun lobby continues to use this as a theme to oppose the entire effort, it could be simply dealt with in a video that showed responsible gun owners shooting for sport, juxtaposed against armed children using AK-47s.

III. Capacity-building to support treaty

Once a treaty is developed and the campaign for signatures commences, a full-scale effort will be needed to support states which have either signed or do not think that they have the resources to meet the requirements of the treaty. This will be accomplished, as in the land mine campaign, by the coalition of governments and NGOs. A good place to start is with the collection and destruction of those weapons that a state declares surplus. In many cases such a declaration will be politically charged, as in South Africa. States which take such a risk should know that donor states will be there to support such action. In the case of Mali, the UN and several donor states provided the resources to successfully reintegrate the guerrillas who turned in and destroyed their weapons.

IV. Build and Enhance United Nations Capacity to Address Problem

Since the problems are global in nature, a parallel effort must be made to build and enhance international organizations to better contribute to solving the problem. The UN Small Arms Panel made several recommendations to improve UN peace operations. First, guidelines need to be established to assist negotiators on peace settlements regarding small arms and light weapons, to include plans for the collection of weapons and their disposal and destruction. Second, assistance should be provided to peacekeeping missions in implementing weapons elements of mandates. Third, there should be a disarmament component established in all peacekeeping operations undertaken by the United Nations.

A comparison with the how the UN Department of Humanitarian Affairs (DHA) deals with the anti-personnel landmines (APM) points up the need for more attention to small arms and light weapons by the UN bureaucracy. DHA has a home page on the Internet, and arguably serves as the focal point for most of the action on dealing with APMs, for NGOs as well as national governments and IGOs. They also are very active in publicizing the negative effects of this weapon. A similar UN organizational home is needed for small arms and light weapons. Perhaps this could be the first priority of the new Department for Disarmament and Arms Regulation (DDAR) at the UN.

The global consensus that has emerged surrounding the linkage between excessive arms accumulations and the outbreak and exacerbation of conflict should provide the political will for the Member States to task the UN to at last take on an enhanced role in the variety of weapons-focused responses that have been outlined in this report. In the reform plan document *Renewing the United Nations*, it is stated that "nations everywhere have come to recognize their stake in the success of multilateral negotiations and the monitoring of weapons developments. As a consequence, the United Nations has taken centre stage in the worldwide effort to limit both weapons and conflict." This report also identifies "the flow of conventional weapons and small arms into the hands of civilians..as a new danger.[10] The reforms proposed include a new Department for Disarmament and Arms Regulation (UNDDAR) with an Under Secretary General. While the UNDDAR will continue to perform its traditional roles as the support agency for the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) process and the Register of Conventional Arms, it is in the area of small arms and light weapons that this organization can be proactive and contribute more substantively. Specifically, it should establish an effective monitoring capability to identify and inform the international community of those situations in which weapons-focused solutions will be most effective. Also, since the collection and destruction of surplus arms is becoming more prevalent, the UNDDAR could take the lead in coordinating the expertise needed to conduct such operations, especially those cases which occur separate from official peace operations.

---

[10]. *Renewing the United Nations: A Programme for Reform.* (New York: The United Nations, 14 July 1997). Document # A/51/950, pp. 40-41.

E. Conclusion

At some point an international meeting must take place, not to go over the consensus that exists, but rather to get down to some serious organizing. Priority activities include developing media materials, especially videos, which graphically describe the humanitarian crisis caused by these weapons. It is not too early to begin discussing the components of a treaty and setting out a phased approach to the campaign.